AT&T obtains permanent injunctions against alleged data brokers

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

SAN ANTONIO - AT&T Services Inc. today announced that it has reached confidential settlements and obtained court-ordered injunctions against 13 alleged pretexters in the federal lawsuits it filed in San Antonio and San Francisco. Similar settlements have been reached with two more defendants, and the courts' entry of permanent injunctions is expected to follow shortly. The settlements reflect undisclosed cash payments together with agreed permanent injunctions that forbid each defendant from engaging in any future unlawful pretexting activity.

Separately, following a hearing on Friday, March 23 in the United States District Court for the Northern District of California, the court granted a preliminary injunction against Lobel Financial Corporation, which will be the only remaining defendant in the lawsuits.

"We stated at the time we filed these suits that AT&T would use every means available to vigorously pursue individuals and companies who, through fraud, attempt to obtain unauthorized access to customer information," said Dorothy Attwood, chief privacy officer for AT&T. "We have done just that and are very pleased with the results of these cases. We believe that the results send a clear and decisive message that has had a significant and chilling effect on the pretexting community."

In addition to seeking the legal sanctions, AT&T has taken additional steps to prevent this type of activity in the future. "We intend to remain vigilant in order to keep information about our customers secure," Attwood said.

AT&T originally filed the federal lawsuits against unidentified "John Doe" defendants in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Texas on Aug. 23, 2006, and in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California on Sept. 6, 2006. The lawsuits allege that the defendants used fraudulent means to gain access to AT&T's business records containing confidential customer information, including calling-record information. The lawsuits, together with AT&T's successful motions for expedited discovery, gave AT&T the authority to issue subpoenas to Internet service providers in an effort to obtain the identities of the perpetrators. Ultimately, 16 businesses and individuals were identified and named as defendants in the lawsuits.

The 13 defendants for whom agreed permanent injunctions have already been obtained are: Brett Alford of Jacksonville, Fla.; A L Skip, Inc. of Brentwood, Calif.; Michael Alan, Inc. of Arvada, Colo.; Autostar U.S.A., Inc. of Corpus Christi, Texas; DWC Research, Inc. of Tampa, Fla.; EZ Auto Solutions, Inc. of Galt, Calif.; Katherine Martens of Lutz, Fla.; Kym McDaniel of Ellijay, Ga.; Nae-Mo Corporation d/b/a Mathews and Michaels of Dallas, Texas; Nowcom Corporation of Los Angeles, Calif.; Receivables Specialist, Inc. of Tamarac, Fla.; SRG, Inc. of Richardson, Texas; and Trace America, Inc. of Bonita Springs, Fla. AT&T has also reached agreements with two other defendants: Data Research Inc. of Tucson, Ariz., and WMADM, Inc. d/b/a Wm. Maloy Company of Anaheim, Calif., and expects that agreed permanent injunctions against those defendants will be entered soon.

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